



### **Celebrating Black History Month: A Reflection from Founder Elaine Gross**

Elaine Gross, Founder and President Emerita of ERASE Racism, released today the following reflections on Black History Month (February 2026):

This year, during Black History Month, President Donald Trump's Truth Social account posted on February 5 a video depicting former President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama as apes. In response to criticism from Republicans, the video was removed the next day but with no apology from the President.

That's the immediate context in which Black History Month takes place, but there's been an entire year since the last Black History Month in which the Trump administration has advanced white supremacy and moved aggressively to undermine America's longstanding commitment to diversity.

Interestingly, even the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – whose mission is “With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values” – is promoting white nationalist images and slogans. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, “a Hatewatch review of DHS social media posts and web content found that the federal agency utilizes white nationalist and anti-immigrant images and slogans in recruitment materials.”

The Trump administration's support for white supremacy is not new. In November 2019, in President Trump's first term, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights called for the firing of Trump advisor Stephen Miller. They stated: “Stephen Miller represents white supremacy, violent extremism, and hate – all ideologies that are antithetical to the fundamental values that guide our democracy. Allowing him to remain a White House advisor is a betrayal of our national ideals of justice, inclusion, and fairness.”

Yet in the second Trump administration Stephen Miller has even more power. As Ashley Parker of The Atlantic told NPR recently, “He's incredibly powerful. Steve Bannon and other people jokingly call him the prime minister.”

Stephen Miller is perhaps best known, as [NPR reports](#), as “a chief architect of the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown.” That crackdown has generated intense public opposition due to the killings by ICE officers of two American citizens in Minneapolis with no criminal records. As ICE is part of DHS, it ironically shares the mission to “safeguard the American people.” That irony is not lost on Americans, as the public response to the two deaths echoes the outcry after the 2020 killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers.

The irony of the administration continues, as The White House acts to ensure that America’s schools instill, in the words of [Executive Order 14190](#), “a patriotic admiration for our incredible Nation and the values for which we stand,” while detaining children through ICE crackdowns at skyrocketing rates. As [MS NOW reports](#), “Recent [independent analysis by The Marshall Project](#) shows that the number of children held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement has skyrocketed in Trump’s second term — from an average of about 25 children detained per day during the final 16 months of Biden’s presidency to about 170 children per day under Trump. On some days, the analysis found, “ICE held 400 children or more.”

What values exactly are those detained children learning at the hands of the administration? What values are all children learning, as they witness detentions of children, daycare workers, and young parents? These are the actions of cruelty, not respect for human life and liberty. They are acts of lawlessness, not patriotism.

Now the Trump administration proposes to change the way we vote in America. As [The New York Times reports](#), “President Trump has repeatedly suggested that he wants the Republican-led federal government to “[nationalize](#)” or “[take over](#)” the running of elections.” His allies in Congress are simultaneously advancing legislation – the [Make Elections Great Again \(MEGA\) Act](#) – that would make voting more difficult.

These are proposals of the president and his allies – a president who falsely and consistently claims that he won the 2020 election, who has pardoned those who sought to overthrow the lawful actions of Congress to certify the election of his opponent, and who has driven from the party those who have sought to hold him accountable. These proposals also completely ignore the fact that elections in the United States are free and fair.

As the [Brennan Center for Justice writes](#): “In 2025, a new threat to free and fair elections emerged: the federal government. Since day one of his second term, the Trump administration has attempted to rewrite election rules to burden voters and usurp control of election systems, targeted and threatened election officials and others who keep elections free and fair, supported people who undermine election administration, and retreated from the federal government’s role of protecting voters and the electoral process.”

Nationalizing state elections is blatantly unconstitutional, and the legislative actions would make voting harder. That is exactly what this White House – and its allies – want to achieve.

President Trump's actions to equate the Obamas with apes, a well-known caricature advancing white supremacy, and to advance executive policies and legislation that would do the same are particularly poignant during Black History Month, which, of course, this administration does not recognize. Frequently during this month, many Americans appreciate the lives, contributions, and challenges of African Americans. Instead, the Trump administration is doing all that it can to make our nation a shining example of white supremacy.

As Black History Month continues, and in the months and years ahead, we have our work cut out for us. ERASE Racism will be championing inclusiveness and fairness and justice for all. I look forward to seeing you on the road ahead.